

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method of providing automated document retention for an electronic document ~~documents~~, ~~said method~~ comprising:
~~obtaining an electronic document;~~
(a) assigning a document retention policy to the electronic document, the document retention policy being based on a recurring cut-off retention schedule; and
(b) cryptographically ~~imposing~~ associating the document retention policy with ~~on~~ the electronic document.

2. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 1, ~~wherein said method further comprising~~ comprises:
~~subsequently determining whether a document retention period for the electronic document has been exceeded; and~~
(c) cryptographically preventing access to the electronic document in accordance with the document retention policy when ~~the~~ a document retention period for the electronic document has been exceeded.

3. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 1, wherein:
~~wherein said imposing operates to utilize~~ step (b) utilizes a cryptographic key to ~~impose~~ associate the document retention policy, and

~~wherein~~ the document retention policy specifies a document retention period and a cut-off period.

4. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the document retention policy specifies a document retention period that expires a predetermined period of time after the cut-off period.

5. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the cut-off period corresponds to a maximum off-line period of a client.

6. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said ~~imposing~~ associating comprises acquiring a cryptographic key from a server over a network, the cryptographic key being used to associate ~~impose~~ the document retention policy.

7. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 6, ~~wherein said method further comprising~~ comprises:

~~determining whether the document retention period has expired; and~~

(c) deactivating the cryptographic key when ~~said determining determines that the~~ a document retention period has expired, thereby preventing further access to the electronic document.

8. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 7, wherein:
~~wherein~~ said ~~imposing~~ associating operates to utilize a cryptographic key to
~~impose~~ associate the document retention policy, and
~~wherein~~ the document retention policy specifies a document retention period and
a cut-off period.

9. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the
document retention policy specifies a document retention period that expires a
predetermined period of time after the cut-off period.

10. (currently amended) A method ~~for periodically providing document
retention keys to clients of a document retention system via a network, said method
comprising:~~

determining whether a cut-off period for a ~~current or prior~~ document retention
key has been reached;

generating a next document retention key to be used to encrypt an electronic
~~documents~~ document during a next cut-off period, the next document retention key
having a document retention period associated therewith; and

notifying a client ~~any of the clients that are connected to the network~~ of the next
document retention key.

11. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 10, ~~wherein said
method further comprises~~ further comprising:

~~subsequently determining whether the prior document retention key is to be
deactivated based on the document retention period; and~~

deactivating the prior document retention key when ~~said determining determines~~
~~that~~ the prior document retention key is to be deactivated.

12. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the
document retention period is a predetermined duration of time following the end of the
next cut-off period.

13. (currently amended) A method for restricting access to an electronic
document, ~~said method~~ comprising:

~~identifying an electronic document to be secured, the electronic document having~~
~~at least a data portion that contains data;~~

~~obtaining a document key;~~

encrypting ~~the~~ a data portion of ~~the~~ an electronic document using ~~the~~ a document
key to produce an encrypted data portion;

~~obtaining using~~ using a retention access key, ~~the retention access key being used to~~
~~enforce~~ associate a document retention policy ~~on~~ with the electronic document;

encrypting the document key using the retention access key to produce an
encrypted document key, the retention access key ~~only~~ being usable for said encrypting
during a cut-off period of a recurring cut-off retention schedule;

forming a secured electronic document from at least the encrypted data portion
and the encrypted document key; and
storing the secured electronic document.

14. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the
retention access key is a public retention access key.

15. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the
document retention policy specifies a document retention period that expires a
predetermined period of time after the cut-off period.

16. (currently amended) A method for accessing a secured electronic
document ~~by a requester~~, the secured electronic document having at least a header
portion and a data portion, ~~said method~~ comprising:

obtaining a retention access key, the retention access key being used to associate
~~enforce~~ a document retention period of a document retention policy ~~on~~ with the
electronic document, the retention access key being usable ~~only~~ during the document
retention period following a cut-off period of a recurring cut-off retention schedule;

obtaining an encrypted document key from the header portion of the secured
electronic document;

decrypting the encrypted document key using the retention access key to produce
a document key; and

decrypting an encrypted data portion of the secured electronic document using the document key to produce a data portion;~~and~~
~~supplying the data portion to the requestor.~~

17. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 16, wherein the retention access key is identified by an indicator within a header portion of the secured electronic document.

18. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 16, wherein the retention access key is a private retention access key.

19. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 16, wherein, ~~if permitted,~~ said obtaining obtains the retention access key being obtained from a server.

20. (currently amended) A The method as recited in claim 16, wherein the document retention period is a predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the cut-off period.

21. (currently amended) A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for providing ~~automated~~ document retention for an electronic document ~~electronic documents~~, said computer readable medium comprising:

~~computer program code for obtaining an electronic document;~~

computer program code for assigning a document retention policy to the electronic document, the document retention policy being based on a recurring cut-off retention schedule; and

computer program code for cryptographically associating ~~imposing~~ the document retention policy ~~on~~ with the electronic document.

22. (currently amended) A The computer readable medium as recited in claim 21, wherein said computer readable medium further comprises:

~~computer program code for subsequently determining whether a document retention period for the electronic document has been exceeded; and~~

computer program code for cryptographically preventing access to the electronic document in accordance with the document retention policy when a ~~the~~ document retention period for the electronic document has been exceeded.

23. (currently amended) A The computer readable medium as recited in claim 21,

wherein said computer program code for cryptographically associates ~~imposing~~ operates to utilize a cryptographic key to associate ~~impose~~ the document retention policy, and

wherein the document retention policy specifies a document retention period and a cutoff period.

24. (currently amended) A ~~The~~ computer readable medium as recited in claim 23, wherein the document retention policy specifies a document retention period that expires a predetermined period of time after the cut-off period.

25. (currently amended) A file security system for restricting access to an electronic file files, ~~said file security system~~ comprising:

a key store that stores a plurality of cryptographic key pairs, each of the cryptographic key pairs including a public key and a private key, at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to a retention policy, the retention policy having a document retention period and a cut-off period; and

an access manager operatively connected to said key store, said access manager ~~makes~~ configured to make available, for each of the cut-off periods, a different one of the public keys of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs, and ~~said access manager determines to determine~~ whether the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy is permitted to be provided to a requestor based on whether the document retention period following the cut-off period has expired,

wherein the requestor requires the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy to access a secured electronic file, and wherein the secured electronic file was previously secured using the public key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy, and at the time the electronic file was so secured, the public key was within the cut-off period and available for use.